

Fire Marshal Division

2002 Annual Report

Fire Marshal Division responsibilities are divided into the following areas:

- ◆ Fire Investigation
- ◆ Fire Incident Reporting
- ◆ Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council
- ◆ Hazardous Materials Emergencies
- ◆ Public Fire Safety Education
- ◆ Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention
- ◆ Fire Investigation Training to Locals
- ◆ Michigan Insured Fire Loss Reporting System
- ◆ Fireworks Enforcement
- ◆ Explosives Permits

Fire Investigation

The primary mission of the Fire Marshal Division is to determine the origin and cause of fires. This function is generally carried out at the request of a local fire department following the occurrence of a fire in their jurisdiction. Fire investigation is the responsibility of the Field Operations Section of the Fire Marshal Division. The division has 19 Specialist Sergeants assigned to fire investigation responsibilities, strategically located at 18 field offices statewide. Division investigators are also responsible for follow-up investigation, detection, and prosecution of fire-related fraud, arson awareness training, enforcement of fireworks and explosives laws, response to imminent hazards, and consultation to fire and law enforcement authorities.

The Michigan Fire Prevention Code, Act 207 of 1941, as amended, authorizes the State Fire Marshal to investigate and inquire into the origin and cause of all fires that occur in the state. The Fire Marshal Inquiry is a formal inquiry utilized to obtain information in regard to fire investigations that may not be available through normal investigative techniques. The inquiry subpoena can also be used to obtain records and documents of any kind that may be material to a crime committed in connection with a fire. This service is also provided to local police and fire investigators.

The Arson Hotline (1-800-44ARSON) is a statewide program to gather information in regard to arson fires and is administered by the Fire Marshal Division. All tips are recorded and forwarded to the appropriate agency for follow-up. There is a reward of up to \$5,000 for information that leads to an arrest and/or conviction on arson charges. The Michigan Arson Prevention Committee funds the Arson Hotline. In 2002, the program paid over \$36,000 for arson tips that resulted in 38 arrests for arson-related crimes.

Fire Incident Reporting

Michigan leads the nation with the highest percentage of fire reporting. In 2002, 94 percent of the 1,075 fire departments in the state participated in the National Fire Incident Reporting system (NFIRS). The number of departments filing electronically increased to 83 percent.



In May, the NFIRS Advisory Committee voted unanimously to have all fire departments in the state convert to electronic filing by January 1, 2003. This allows for more timely annual reports, as well as real time access to Michigan's data for investigation and public education purposes.

Michigan recorded a total of 155 fire-related deaths in 2002, a slight rise from 2001; 137 of these deaths occurred in 103 residential fires. The highest percentage of these fires (80 percent) was single fatality, with double-fatality fires accounting for 15 percent, and multi-fatality fires (three or more deaths) accounting for 6 percent of the total reported. Three fires claimed more than 4 lives in 2002; a house fire in Detroit claimed the lives of three adults and one child; a house explosion in Van Buren County claimed the lives of three adults and two children; and a nursing home fire in Genesee County claimed the lives of five elderly residents.

In the 103 fatal residential fires, 65 percent reported no smoke alarm present or the smoke alarm could not be found during investigation. Of the remaining 35 percent, just over one-half were reported as operating.

The largest majority of fatal fires reported during 2002 were caused by unattended cooking, careless use of smoking materials, or careless use of heating equipment.

In 2002, four Michigan firefighters lost their lives in the line of duty.



Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council



Responsibilities: The Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council (MFFTC) was established by Public Act No. 291 of 1966. MFFTC serves the training needs of the state's 1,075 fire departments and 30,998 fire fighters by: Preparing and publishing training standards; establishing courses of study; certifying instructors; establishing regional training centers to assist local departments with training; cooperating with state, federal and local fire agencies to facilitate training of fire fighters; and developing and administering mandatory certification exams for new fire fighters.

Fire departments rely on MFFTC to provide minimum training standards and quality training, testing and certification systems that are accessible to fire fighters statewide. The MFFTC offers more than 50 courses ranging from basic fire fighter to administrative level training for fire officers.

2002 Training Year: The 2002 training year was again very busy with increases in all areas of activity. The MFFTC administered 1,323 courses (+3.4 percent) and issued certificates to 22,329 fire fighters (+4.5 percent) that successfully completed training. Additional services provided in 2002 included: testing and certification of 2,811 new fire fighters (+20.8 percent) and certification of 1,644 fire officers (+82.1 percent) at the supervisory, managerial and administrative levels

New Courses: Implementation of four new Emergency Response to Terrorism (ERT) courses titled: *ERT: Tactical Considerations-Hazardous Materials*, *ERT: Tactical Considerations-Emergency Medical Services*, *ERT: Tactical Considerations-Company Officer*, and *ERT: Strategic Considerations for Command Officers*. Train-the Trainers (TtT's) were completed for 120 ERT instructors. MFFTC adopted the much-needed *Advanced Vehicle Stabilization* course and completed TtT's for 52 instructors. The Volunteer Fire Insurance Services (VFIS) *Driver Training Refresher* course was evaluated and is recommended for Fire Departments to administer and complete, at least every two years, to maintain driver proficiency.

Other Activities: The *Instructor Guide and Administrative Manual* (IGAM) was updated and converted to electronic media, and a CD was sent to the affected 1,250 certified instructors. A policy for Americans with Disability Act (ADA) required by Federal Law was finalized and adopted by MFFTC. In response to numerous requests, a "self help" manual of *Laws, Administrative Rules and Standards* (LARS) affecting Michigan Fire Departments was compiled and distributed to all fire departments. The MFFTC web site was finalized and has been available to users since December 31, 2001. The site allows continuous access to all MFFTC programs and services and has been experiencing over 1,000 hits per month. Current editions of the IGAM and LARS manuals are also available on the MFFTC web site.

Recognition: The MFFTC would like to recognize the instructors, test evaluators, county training committees, regional training centers and training coordinators who work so hard to provide quality training in all 83 counties. It is also appropriate to give special recognition to the families of these dedicated individuals who graciously endure the absence of their family members. On behalf of all the fire fighters in Michigan, thank you from MFFTC!

Hazardous Materials Emergencies

The Fire Marshal Division provides an effective and efficient response to hazardous materials incidents in order to investigate and abate any dangerous condition beyond the capability of local government. Fire Marshal Division investigators respond to hazardous materials emergencies bringing them to a successful and safe conclusion.

Situations include barrels of unknown product washing up on shore, a fire at a warehouse containing radioactive materials and other dangerous chemicals, dangerous and explosive chemicals located in a school storeroom, railroad and water shipping accidents resulting in large fires, and releases of dangerous products.

During the last week of May 2002, the Division was called upon to serve as Incident Command when a train carrying propane and sulfuric acid derailed in Pottersville, Michigan. As a result of this train derailment, the entire population of Pottersville was evacuated for five days. The Fire Marshal Division was responsible for ensuring a coordinated response to this emergency. Working with local, state, and national agencies, the Fire Marshal Division ensured a safe response to this emergency and a thorough investigation as to the cause of the incident. Once the area was determined to be safe for the residents of this small central Michigan community, citizens were allowed back to their homes without fear of exposure to any of the hazardous materials involved.



Public Fire Safety Education

The Fire Marshal Division continued serving as the focal point for coordinated public fire safety education. As a result of the widely recognized need to work toward fire-safe communities particularly for our young and elderly, the division continued to focus efforts on providing materials and training to local fire departments to enhance their delivery of public fire safety education programs to their communities during 2002.

The *Safe at Home, Fire Safety Education for Everyone*

fire safety curriculum was expanded to include a Senior Citizen fire safety module. The Public Education Advisory Committee, chaired by the division's public education coordinator, developed the senior citizen module to mirror the elementary school modules, focusing on repeated visits to senior citizen apartment/assisted living complexes and senior centers. Lessons are divided into four seasonal presentations, encouraging educators to visit their senior populations more than once a year and focus on fire safety issues relevant to each season. The *Safe at Home* curriculum is provided free of charge to any fire department, and includes lessons, transparencies, handouts and worksheets. Training is required to receive the curriculum, and focuses on educational methodology and community theory to ensure successful delivery of lessons to any age group. Training sessions in 2002 were held in 10 locations across the state, involving 166 representatives of 81 fire departments. This brings the total of *Safe at Home* trained fire personnel to 728 representatives of 375 Michigan fire departments.



The Division also developed and delivered a two-day Public Fire Safety Education Workshop at the Michigan State Firemen's Association Fall Fire School in November, involving 35 attendees representing fire departments from across the state.

The long-standing residential sprinkler trailer program continued. This program educates citizens about the benefits of installing smoke alarms and residential sprinkler systems to help control home fires. A fire is started inside the trailer, activating a smoke alarm and sprinkler head, demonstrating the effectiveness of sprinklers and smoke alarms to the public. The Division conducted demonstrations at the Michigan State Firemen's Association Annual Conference in Perry, MI in June, and at the Michigan Firemen's Memorial Tournaments in Roscommon, MI in September. Additionally, 14 fire departments used the trailer for demonstrations at open houses and community events.

Michigan Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Program

Children under the age of 18 start the largest number of fires causing serious injury, death and property damage. Nationally juveniles account for over half of all arson arrests. In 2001, children accounted for 30 percent of arson arrests in Michigan with over 9 percent of the fires investigated by the Michigan State Police, Fire Marshal Division were the result of a child using fire inappropriately.

Michigan's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program was developed by the Fire Marshal Division to assess the child's level of interest in fire and to provide early intervention in a multi-disciplinary, community-wide format. This program is only the second state in the nation to receive accreditation from the National Board on Professional Fire Service Qualifications. The program provides specialized training to law enforcement officers, assistant prosecutors, court officers, mental health and social service providers, school personnel and the fire service.

Grant funding through the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and the Fire Service assisted in providing this training at no cost to local agencies. The division held the first specialist training session in June of 2002.

In addition to this specialized training, the first statewide network of intervention specialists and other community programs was developed and is now available on the Michigan State Police, Fire Marshal Division web. Referrals to these specialists occur through the network based on citizen request for assistance. Reference materials and information on the subject of child firesetting, juvenile arson, child development, and programs that are offered in other states are also available on the web.

Fire Investigation Training to Locals



This program provides specialized fire investigation training programs (Fire Investigation I, Fire Investigation II, Vehicle Fire Investigation, Juvenile Firesetter Intervention

Specialist I, and Follow-up Fire Investigation as accredited by the National Board of Fire Service Professional Qualifications. These training's are aimed at providing the local investigator with a strong basis for the investigation of fires and the necessary steps to a complete and thorough fire investigation. Students of the Fire Investigation I, Fire Investigation II and Vehicle Fire Investigation schools are police or fire personnel who are assigned fire investigation responsibilities.

The Arson Follow-up School is offered twice each year to law enforcement officers responsible for assisting with investigations of suspected arson and arson related fraud.



In addition to fire investigation training, the Division co-sponsors the Michigan Arson Prevention Committee's two Prosecutor Schools, the Modular and Mobile Home Fire School, and the Insurance Fraud Investigation school. Fire Investigators are called upon to instruct at the local level on a regular basis in arson awareness and fire investigation.

Michigan Insured Fire Loss Reporting System

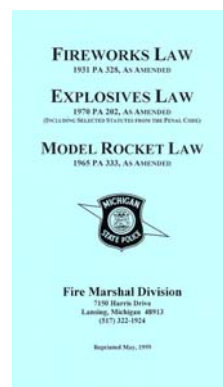
The purpose of the Michigan Insured Fire Loss Reporting System (MIFLRS) is to track fire losses reported to insurance companies. It is designed to provide a criminal investigation database for use in tracking arson fires and fire insurance related fraud.

The MIFLRS program, created under the original Public Act 207 of 1941, requires insurance companies to report fire loss information on claims that exceed \$1,000. Progress is being made toward a completely automated reporting system. This program is intended to track and cross-reference all types of fire loss data and provide investigators with valuable investigative information. Data will also be cross-referenced with fire incident reports submitted by local fire departments further enhancing information available to investigators.

Fireworks

The Fireworks program provides interpretation of the fireworks law, support for enforcement of the law, public awareness information, statistical data about incidents, and technical assistance in identifying illegal devices.

It also publishes and distributes a guide to local government, fire and law enforcement agencies throughout Michigan.



Explosives Permits

The Explosives Permits program provides a statewide-computerized database of explosives permits and sales information. Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies access the information as needed for investigative and regulatory purposes.

The Michigan Fire Service EXPO

*"Coming together is the beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success."
Henry Ford*

The Fire Marshal Division initiated a proposal to implement a Michigan Fire Service EXPO. Statewide fire service organizations and allied state agencies came together as an Executive Committee. The committee was given the task of administering an annual EXPO at a reasonable cost while encouraging personal growth by providing quality training and educational programs; introducing the latest technologies; providing networking opportunities; and encouraging professional excellence through improved communication, cooperation, and coordination. The ultimate goal of the Michigan Fire Service EXPO is to continuously improve service to the citizens of the state of Michigan.



During 2002, activities, workshops and speakers were finalized, scheduled, and contracts for exhibitors, sponsors and advertisers were developed. Forty-two different workshops covering a wide variety of the most current fire service needs will be available during the first Michigan Fire Service EXPO which is scheduled for June 18-22, 2003 at the Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Complete information including the registration form is available at www.mi-fire-expo.org.